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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 08/29/07

Index:

- 1) Top headlines
- 2) Editorials
- 3) Prime Minister's daily schedule

Opinion polls:

- 4) Shuffled Abe cabinet jumps 11 points in Mainichi poll to 33 PERCENT , but public split 43 PERCENT pro and 47 PERCENT con on evaluating the new lineup
- 5) Nikkei poll: Abe cabinet support rate leaps 13 points to 41 PERCENT , with public giving a certain amount of credit to the new lineup
- 6) Support rate for Abe cabinet jumps 11.5 PERCENT in Kyodo poll, but 51 PERCENT of the public still want the prime minister to quit
- 7) Yomiuri poll gives Abe Cabinet a 44 PERCENT support rate, up 12.5 PERCENT , as public seems to have higher expectations of it than before shuffle
- 8) Abe Cabinet support rate rises 7 points to 33 PERCENT in Asahi poll, with non-support rate at 53 PERCENT , down 7 points; 53 PERCENT against extending MSDF duty in Indian Ocean

Fate of Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law:

- 9) Nikkei poll finds 53 PERCENT of public against, 30 PERCENT for extending anti-terror bill to allow MSDF refueling in the Indian Ocean
- 10) Asahi poll finds women and young people strongly against extending the anti-terror bill soon to go before the Diet

11) In telephone conference, new Foreign Minister Machimura tells Secretary Rice he will make every effort to get the anti-terror bill

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passed this fall

12) Prime Minister Abe vows to try every avenue to get the opposition camp to go along with the extension of the anti-terror law this fall

North Korea problem:

13) Japan-North Korea working level talks set for Sept. 5-6 but expectations are low

14) Foreign Minister Machimura: Government considering providing North Korea with humanitarian aid to help flood victims

Political scene:

15) Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano calls DPJ President Ozawa "a fine fellow"

16) Vice Defense Minister Moriya at departure ceremony for outgoing defense minister Koike says he "will miss her" but did he mean it?

17) New LDP Secretary General Aso blocks appointment for former Chief Cabinet Secretary Shiozaki

18) Anti-Abe lawmaker picked for post of LDP deputy policy research chairman

Yasukuni issue:

19) Abe: Yasukuni should decide on whether Class-A war criminals should be unenshrined from Shinto shrine

20) No money in the budget again for a secular war memorial

Articles:

1) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:

TOKYO 00003995 002 OF 010

Abe cabinet approval rating stands at 33 PERCENT ; 53 PERCENT do not support it

Mainichi:

Survey finds 33 PERCENT approve of cabinet, up 11 points, but 52 PERCENT do not; Pollees split over evaluation of reshuffle

Yomiuri:

Survey on reshuffled Abe cabinet: 44 PERCENT support it, up 12 points from after Upper House election; 55 PERCENT think it holds promise

Nikkei:

Abe cabinet: Approval rate reaches 41 PERCENT , up 13 points; Those who replied they "feel a sense of stability" increases 9 points; Moderate praise given to reshuffle

Sankei:

Abe cabinet gets underway: Personnel well aware of their prowess appointed for key positions; Pursue Diet debate with focus on Ozawa:

Tokyo Shimbun:

Hostage crisis in Afghanistan: All South Korean abductees to be released with pullout of military troops as condition, South Korean government announces

Akahata:

Internet cafe refugees reach 5,400; Half of them are nonpermanent workers, according to Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry; 26 PERCENT in their 20s, 23 PERCENT in their 50s

2) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

(1) Power shortage: Challenges remain after summer

(2) Murder of woman: Shadowy job referral service should not be left unheeded

Mainichi:

- (1) Increase in cabinet approval rating only due to LDP's reflection
- (2) Mobile phone site murder case: Time to take second look at excessive use of anonymity

Yomiuri:

- (1) Aegis ships: The way MSDF controls intelligence is far too sloppy
- (2) Murder in Aichi Prefecture: Shed light on reality of shadowy mobile phone sites

Nikkei:

- (1) Make best use of unprecedented personnel appointments to revamp Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry
- (2) Reasons for raising taxes are hardly satisfactory

Sankei:

- (1) Military intelligence leak: Aim at becoming the most trustworthy country in the world in terms of national security
- (2) Internet murder: Root out criminal sites

Tokyo Shimbun:

TOKYO 00003995 003 OF 010

- (1) Abduction of woman in Aichi Prefecture: Anonymity has given rise to heinous crimes
- (2) Japan-China defense exchange should play pivotal role in avoiding crises

Akahata:

- (1) Nuclear-free Japan declaration: The government should take action to root out nuclear weapons

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, August 28

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 29, 2007

10:10

Met at Kantei with Upper House Chairman Otsuji and Secretary General Yamazaki.

13:56

Attended joint cabinet-LDP funeral service for the late Prime Minister Miyazawa at Nippon Budokan Hall.

15:51

Returned to Kantei.

18:19

Returned to his official residence.

4) Poll: Cabinet support at 33 PERCENT , nonsupport at 52 PERCENT

MAINICHI (Top play) (Abridged)
August 29, 2007

The Mainichi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey on Aug. 27-28. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shuffled his cabinet on Aug. 27. His newly launched cabinet got a 33 PERCENT support rate in the survey, up 11 percentage points from the Abe cabinet's all-time low in the last survey conducted Aug. 4-5. The Abe cabinet's support rate rebounded to its level before this summer's election for the House of Councillors. However, the nonsupport rate was 52 PERCENT . As seen from the figure, the Abe cabinet's disapproval rating still accounted for more than half. In addition, there were also opinions pointing to the premier's lack of leadership. The survey showed that there has been no change in the public's severe view. Respondents were also asked if they supported Abe's new cabinet lineup and his ruling Liberal Democratic Party's new executive lineup. In response to this question, public opinion was split, with "yes" accounting for 43 PERCENT and "no" at 47 PERCENT .

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the LDP stood at 26 PERCENT , with the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) likewise scoring 26 PERCENT . In the last survey, the LDP fell to 17 PERCENT in public support. This time, however, the LDP rebounded with a rise of 9 points. The DPJ sustained a drop of 7 points.

5) Poll: Abe cabinet's support rate at 41 PERCENT , up 13 points

NIKKEI (Top play) (Abridged)

TOKYO 00003995 004 OF 010

August 29, 2007

Following up Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's launching of his shuffled cabinet, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun (Nikkei) conducted a spot public opinion survey on Aug. 27-28. The new Abe cabinet's support rate reached 41 PERCENT , up 13 percentage points from the last survey taken in late July. The nonsupport rate was 40 PERCENT , down 23 points. Abe seems to have obtained public support to a certain extent for his removal of cabinet ministers who came under fire for their gaffes or murky political funds. However, there are also critical opinions about the premier who made up his mind to stay on after his ruling Liberal Democratic Party's crushing defeat in this summer's election for the House of Councillors.

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the LDP stood at 35 PERCENT , up 6 points from the last survey. The leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) was at 36 PERCENT . The DPJ still outpaced the LDP. However, the pro-DPJ figure dropped 8 points from the last survey. The margin between the two parties' respective figures has narrowed.

The survey was taken by Nikkei Research Inc. over the telephone on a random digit dialing (RDD) basis. For the survey, samples were chosen from among men and women aged 20 and over across the nation. A total of 1,235 households with one or more voters were sampled, and answers were obtained from 687 persons (55.6 PERCENT).

6) Poll: New Abe cabinet's approval rating rises to 40 PERCENT

TOKYO (Page 1) (Abridged)

August 29, 2007

Following up Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's launching of his shuffled cabinet, Kyodo News conducted a telephone-based spot nationwide public opinion survey from the evening of Aug. 27 through Aug. 28. The approval rating for the new Abe cabinet was 40.5 PERCENT , up 11.5 percentage points from the last survey conducted July 30-31 right after the July 29 House of Councillors election. The disapproval rating was 45.5 PERCENT , down 13.5 points. The Abe cabinet's support rate last topped 40 PERCENT in mid-May before the issue of the government's pension record-keeping flaws was taken up. In the survey, respondents were also asked if they thought the prime minister should step down due to his ruling Liberal Democratic Party's rout in this summer's upper house election. To this question, "yes" accounted for 51.3 PERCENT , up 1.8 points.

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party stood at 38.8 PERCENT , up 7.3 points from a survey taken in late July. The leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) was 25.6 PERCENT , down 12.0 points. New Komeito, the LDP's coalition partner, was at 3.2 PERCENT , down 1.3 points. The Japanese Communist Party was at 3.5 PERCENT , up 0.1 points. The Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) was at 1.8 PERCENT , down 0.9 points. The People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) was at 1.3 PERCENT , up 0.5 points. New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) was at 1.0 PERCENT , down 0.9 points. The proportion of those with no particular party affiliation was 24.1 PERCENT , up 8.2 points.

7) Poll: New Abe cabinet scores 44 PERCENT in public support

YOMIURI (Top play) (Abridged)

August 29, 2007

In the wake of Prime Minister Abe's launching of his new cabinet, the Yomiuri Shimbun conducted a telephone-based spot nationwide public opinion survey from the evening of Aug. 27 through Aug. 28. The new Abe cabinet's support rate was 44.2 PERCENT , up 12.5 percentage points from the 31.7 PERCENT rating in a previous telephone-based spot survey conducted July 30-31 right after the July 29 election for the House of Councillors. The nonsupport rate was 36.1 PERCENT , down 23.8 points.

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party stood at 31.8 PERCENT . The leading opposition Democratic Party (Minshuto) was at 30.9 PERCENT . The LDP was up 0.5 points from the post-election survey, with the DPJ down 0.5 points. However, the public view of the LDP remained severe.

8) Poll: New Abe cabinet's support rate at 33 PERCENT ; Disapproval still high at 53 PERCENT

ASAHI (Top play) (Abridged)
August 29, 2007

Following up Prime Minister Abe's shuffle of his cabinet, the Asahi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based spot nationwide public opinion survey from the evening of Aug. 27 through the evening of Aug. 28. In the survey, the rate of public support for the new Abe cabinet was 33 PERCENT , up from an all-time low of 26 PERCENT in the last survey conducted July 30-31, right after the July 29 election for the House of Councillors. However, the disapproval rating was still high at 53 PERCENT (60 PERCENT in the last survey). The Abe cabinet's approval rating has rebounded with the shuffle but it remains low. In the survey, respondents were asked about their image of the prime minister after his cabinet's shuffle. In response, only 18 PERCENT answered that their image of the prime minister has improved, with 9 PERCENT saying it has worsened and 66 PERCENT saying it remains unchanged. Respondents were also asked about the advisability of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which will become a major point at issue in this fall's extraordinary Diet session. To this question, negative answers accounted for 53 PERCENT , with affirmative answers at 35 PERCENT .

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party stood at 25 PERCENT (21 PERCENT in the last survey), with the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) at 32 PERCENT (34 PERCENT in the last survey). The DPJ stayed above the LDP from the last survey.

Among other political parties, New Komeito, the LDP's coalition partner, was at 3 PERCENT (5 PERCENT in the last survey), with the Japanese Communist Party at 3 PERCENT (3 PERCENT in the last survey) and the Social Democratic Party (Shaminto) at 1 PERCENT (2 PERCENT in the last survey).

9) Nikkei poll on Antiterrorism Special Measures Law: 53 PERCENT against extension; only 30 PERCENT support it

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Full)

The Antiterrorism Special Measures Law expires on Nov. 1. Regarding the question of whether to extend the law, 53 PERCENT replied, "The law should not be extended," largely topping the number of pollees

TOKYO 00003995 006 OF 010

who said, "The law should be extended." The Maritime Self-Defense Force is carrying out refueling operations in the Indian Ocean for vessels of the US and other countries, which are engaging in a mopping up campaign in the Afghanistan theater. The government is aiming at amending the law in the extraordinary Diet session to be convened in September. The fact that the poll showed a pronounced number of pollees taking a cautious stance toward an extension of the law could affect future Diet deliberations.

10) Asahi Shimbun poll: Women, young people strongly oppose extension of Antiterrorism Law:

ASAHI (Page 3) (Excerpt)
August 29, 2007

The poll found that many pollees were against an extension of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law with its breakdown showing 35 PERCENT in favor of the bill and 53 PERCENT against it. Among male pollees, 44 PERCENT supported it, and 50 PERCENT opposed it. Female pollees took a cautious stance with 26 PERCENT supporting it and 56 PERCENT opposed. Another feature of the poll results is that respondents in their 20s and 40s were strongly against an extension of the law.

Among those who support the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), 60 PERCENT supported the law's extension, while 29 PERCENT opposed it. Only 17 PERCENT of pollees who support the Democratic Party of Japan (JDP or Minshuto) approved it, while a whopping 75 PERCENT opposed it. The poll thus showed a stark contrast between the views of LDP supporters and DPJ supporters over the question of whether to extend the law.

Regarding Abe's appointment of former Iwate Prefecture Governor Masuda as internal affairs minister with a view to shifting the current policy of slighting regional district, 41 PERCENT expressed their positive expectations. The appointment of Masuzoe as health, labor and welfare minister, the post to deal with the pension fiasco, was also supported by 73 PERCENT. Both figures topped the number of those who replied that they had no expectations. Masuzoe's popularity was visible with more than 80 PERCENT of LDP supporters and about 70 PERCENT of DPJ supporters and swing voters expressing their expectations.

11) Machimura promises Rice to do his utmost for extending antiterrorism law

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
August 29, 2007

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura had a teleconference with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday, in which Rice

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congratulated Machimura for his assumption of office. They also exchanged views on the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which has been the legal basis for the Maritime Self-Defense Force's assistance to the US-led coalition forces in the Indian Ocean. According to the Foreign Ministry, the two leaders agreed that it is essential for Japan-US relations to extend the law so that the MSDF will be able to continue its refueling operation beyond November 1. Machimura promised that he would do his best to extend the law, and Rice said that she is counting on him.

12) Prime Minister Abe: "I'll consult with opposition parties and

TOKYO 00003995 007 OF 010

make every effort" for extension of antiterrorism law

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)
August 29, 2007

When asked by reporters at the Prime Minister's Official Residence yesterday about the question of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told them: "I want the law extended. For that, I want to discuss the matter with the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) and other opposition parties. I'll make every effort to obtain their understanding." Abe thus indicated his willingness to consult the matter with the opposition bloc.

DPJ Deputy President Naoto Kan in this regard indicated a cautious stance in a speech in Otaru City, Hokkaido, by noting: "I think it is not what the public wants to see that our party meets the ruling coalition halfway. The first thing for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the ruling bloc to do is to explain what they want to do specifically." DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama, as well, told

reporters: "They do not understand our party. Let's debate fairly. I want the public to judge which side is correct."

13) Japan-DPRK working group to open on Sept. 5-6, likely to discuss also how to "settle the past"

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
August 29, 2007

The Japan-North Korea working group on diplomatic normalization is to hold talks on Sept. 5-6 in Mongolia. At the session, the Japanese government plans to announce its willingness to discuss also the question of "settling the past" as called for by North Korea. This move reflects Tokyo's desire to elicit somehow a positive response from North Korea to the abduction issue by following Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura's statement saying that he would consider providing aid to North Korea, which has suffered from a flood. Optimism is, however, guarded for it is not known how the North, which has been hard-lined toward Japan, will react.

The Japan-North Korea working group will hold talks in Ulan Bator, Mongolia. The Mongolian government, which has diplomatic relations with North Korea, has previously told Tokyo that it would be willing to provide a venue for Japan-North Korea talks.

The chief delegates to the six-party talks in their meeting in July agreed to hold talks at the five working groups, including the one on Japan-North Korea diplomatic normalization, within August. The three working groups already held talks, but two other working groups -- the one on US-North Korea diplomatic normalization (which is to meet on Sept. 1-2) and the one on Japan-North Korea diplomatic normalization -- have yet to hold talks.

14) Machimura: Government is considering humanitarian aid to North Korean flood victims

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Full)
August 29, 2007

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura in a press interview yesterday indicated that the government would consider extending humanitarian aid to flood victims in North Korea. Machimura said: "In view of the severity of the disaster, I wonder if we should link (the aid) to

TOKYO 00003995 008 OF 010

the abduction issue. We are now hastily studying the matter. We must come up with an answer swiftly."

Japan and North Korea are scheduled to hold a meeting of their working-group to discuss diplomatic normalization for two days from September 5 in Mongolia under the framework of the six-party talks. Machimura's statement on humanitarian aid is apparently aimed to induce a positive stance from North Korea regarding the abduction issue.

15) Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano: Ozawa is a good person

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
August 29, 2007

Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano talked about Ichiro Ozawa, president of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), at a press conference yesterday: "I know him well through jobs and our common interests. He is a good person." He took a completely different position from his predecessor, Shiozaki, who had repeatedly criticized Ozawa. In the wake of the trading of places between the ruling and opposition camps in the House of Councillors, Yosano apparently was trying to set forth a cooperative stance with the DPJ.

Yosano said: "When I was serving my fifth term in the Diet, he was the LDP's secretary general." Referring to one of his interests, Yosano, who is regarded as the best Go player in the political world, jokingly said: "I have given Mr. Ozawa guidance in the game of Go." He then revealed that Ozawa had asked him sometimes to play Go and that they played only once after Ozawa left the LDP.

16) "You will be missed" -- a farewell address to Koike from Moriya, but did he mean it?

SANKEI (Page 5) (Abridged slightly)
August 29, 2007

Former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike delivered a speech in a ceremony for her departure from the post, held last evening at the ministry. Koike called for a tighter information management system by saying in the speech: "I would like to see thorough information management and an enhanced Japan-US alliance. This is my last message." Vice Administrative Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya, who had locked horns with Koike over his successor, is also scheduled to retire on September 1. Moriya calmly delivered a farewell address that went, "You will be greatly missed by all of us at the Defense Ministry." Moriya's message stopped short of mentioning information security, however. A chilly atmosphere surrounded Koike and Moriya until the last moment.

17) Plan to appoint Shiozaki as senior deputy chairman of the LDP Policy Research Council ends fruitlessly due to Aso's opposition

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
August 29, 2007

Following the inauguration of a new cabinet of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) also launched yesterday a new executive board led by Secretary General Taro Aso. Prior to the renewal of the LDP executive lineup, it had been expected that former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki, a symbol of the

TOKYO 00003995 009 OF 010

so-called "cabinet of friends of Abe," would be picked as senior deputy chairman of the LDP Policy Research Council, but that portfolio did not go to him. It is said that Aso, who has now prioritized a policy of placing emphasis on revitalizing regional economy, was unwilling to put Shiozaki in that post, assuming that he as a reformist might take the initiative in making policy decisions by keeping Policy Research Council Chairman Nobuteru Ishihara under his control.

Shiozaki just left the chief cabinet secretary post after being the lightning rod for angry charges over the "cabinet of friends." Shiozaki and Ishihara, members of the new breed of lawmakers who were specialists in making policies, worked hard for consultations between the ruling and opposition parties during the 1998 extraordinary Diet session, which focused on revitalizing the financial system. Because of this reason, Ishihara intended to pick him as his deputy.

Aso, however, opposed the idea. He stressed in a press conference held soon after becoming secretary general: "Our mission is to rebuild the LDP that was destroyed (by (former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi))." He believes that rebuilding the LDP from the humiliating defeat in the July Upper House election can be made by revitalizing local economies devastated by the Koizumi's structural reform drive. He appears to have aimed at underscoring a change in the party's policy by excluding Shiozaki.

Instead of Shiozaki, Kisaburo Tokai, a member of the Yamasaki faction, was selected. After the Upper House election, Tokai joined a study group of lawmakers critical of Prime Minister Abe, but he left the group yesterday, saying, "Since I became senior deputy chairman of the Policy Research Council, I cannot continue to be in the group."

18) Tokai, critical of Abe, named Policy Research Council senior deputy chairman

ASAHI (Page 4) (Abridged slightly)
August 29, 2007

The Liberal Democratic Party decided yesterday to appoint former Senior Vice Education, Science and Technology Minister Kisaburo Tokai of the Yamasaki faction as Policy Research Council senior

deputy chairman. Prime Minister Abe had planned the appointment of former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki, but the LDP leadership rejected it. The party apparently aims to play up a well-balanced lineup by appointing Tokai, who is critical of Abe's policy course.

Tokai was a member of the group launched by LDP Lower House members after the July Upper House election calling for a review of Abe's policy course, including his economic growth strategy. The leadership decided to give Tokai the post upon his withdrawal from the group. Policy Research Council Chairman Nobuteru Ishihara explained Tokai's appointment this way: "He served as policy chief of New Party Sakigake (or Harbinger, established in 1993). We gave importance to that experience." Meanwhile, Shiozaki worked as a driving force of Abe's economic growth strategy as chief cabinet secretary. Abe urged Ishihara and others to approve the appointment

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of Shiozaki, who pushed ahead with the reform policy course, but Secretary General Taro Aso and Ishihara reportedly rejected it,

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citing Shiozaki's coordination ability and other factors. Shiozaki

TOKYO 00003995 010 OF 010

was instead offered the post of research commission chairman, but he declined it.

19) Prime Minister Abe: Yasukuni should decide on whether Class-A war criminals should be unenshrined from Shinto shrine

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
August 29, 2007

Asked about Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano's pet opinion that Yasukuni Shrine should separate Class-A war criminals from it, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe responded:

"I think that is Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano's view. I believe that Yasukuni Shrine, a religious organization, should make a decision on that (whether Class-A war criminals should be unenshrined from the shrine)."

20) Government not to make a budgetary request on a new memorial facility for next fiscal year budget owing to lack of "national consensus"

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
August 29, 2007

The government yesterday decided not to make a budgetary request for a survey intended for the construction of a new national memorial facility (for the war dead) in compiling the fiscal 2008 budget bill.

Prime Minister Abe has indicated his cautiousness about constructing a new memorial facility. The government also has judged it is difficult to submit a budgetary request in this regard at this point in time as an aide to the prime minister said, "No national consensus has been obtained."

The construction of a memorial facility was proposed at the end of 2002 by then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda's advisory panel because of objections from China and South Korea to then Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine. The panel suggested that "it is necessary to construct a permanent, secular facility to be run by the state." Some in the ruling parties are calling for making a budgetary request for a survey concerning the construction of such a facility, but a budgetary request has been put on hold every year.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano has insisted on separately enshrining the Class-A war criminals from Yasukuni Shrine. Asked about this by reporters late yesterday at the Prime Minister's Official Residence, Prime Minister Abe said: "I think that is Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano's idea. That is a matter the religious corporation Yasukuni

Shrine should decide."

DONOVAN